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Educated Adult Reading Programs: What's Needed.

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Five topics for suggested study in an educated-adult reading program are presented in outline form. Rapid reading is seen as a major goal of most participating students, and critical reading, listening, writing, and speaking are noted as important subjects to be covered. Study methods, techniques for reading problems in science and math, and general reading habits are included. Getting students to practice at home is noted as a significant challenge for such a program. Useful materials are listed, and a careful use of tests is advised. A discussion on what improvements may be expected is recommended. (RT)

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Educated Adult Reading Programs: What's Needed

by A. J. Lowe, University of South Florida

College reading personnel are often asked to conduct a reading course for educated adults. The course is usually offered in the evening, once a week for a term. The interest of the student is usually centered around "speed" or "rapid" reading. Most instructors include other areas of study such as critical reading, study skills, vocabulary, reading of problems, surveying, skimming and scanning, and the reading of newspapers, magazines, and books for information and pleasure. The following outline delineates the various topics which might be studied in an educated adults reading program.

Topic I Rapid Reading

To read rapidly and well is a major goal of most students who participate in reading improvement programs. We do know that it is physiologically possible to read about 600-800 WPM and actually see every word. We can cover well over 1000 WPM not actually reading every word.

RE001 771

Below is an outline concerning speeded reading:

I. The Determinors of Reading Rate

a. Purpose of Reader

b. Background of Reader

c. Difficulty of Material

d. Type of Material

e. Intangibles

II. Global Aspects of Reading Rate

a. Visual Machines

b. Perceptual

c. Skills and Drills Printed Matter

d. Social

e. Cultural

f. Thinking

g. Psychological

III. Techniques

a. Goal Directed

b. Conditioning

c. Informal

Topic II <u>Critical Reading</u>

Critical reading, listening, writing and speaking are an integral part of a free yet lawful society. It is our privilege in a representative democracy to fight the propagandist, pedagog, and the phony advertiser. It is our duty to be well informed and active in community life.

I. Questions the critical thinker asks:

A. Is there a hidden motive?

B. Who would want you to believe this?

C. Is the speaker/writer a legitimate authority?

D. Has he really proved his point?

E. What kind of evidence would you require?

II. What to look and listen for:

A. Choice of words

B. Direction

D. Organization

E. Form

E. Tone

III. What to beware of:

A. Confusion of fact and inference

B. Suppression and distortion of truth

C. False analogy

D. Begging the question

E. Oversimplification

F. Use of irrevelant and irrational material

Topic III <u>Study-Type Reading SQ4R</u>

<u>S</u>urvey - Look over the material and make a

<u>Q</u>uestion - out of important headings, etc., and then

<u>R</u>ead - to answer those questions,

<u>R</u>ecite - or test yourself orally, or,

<u>R</u>ite - out your answers. Lastly,

<u>R</u>eview - what you missed and repeat the process.

<u>Intensive Reading</u>: This type of reading is slow, careful and comprehensive. It's main use is for preparation for examinations and the like. Try to really study some material so that you know it thoroughly.

Remember that as you read, you must be <u>actively</u> involved. Reading is a thinking process and it is not a passive act. One must practice each day as directed. Make up your mind to put forth an effort - now.

Topic IV Reading Problems in Science and Mathematics

1. Memorize symbols
2. Memorize definitions of terms
3. Be familiar with the general subject area and know how to read and solve problems (any type)
4. Devote at least one hour of study for every hour of class. (Usually more is needed.)
5. Create an atmosphere of learning in your work and try to stimulate yourself to success by success.
6. Don't fail to ask questions or to arrange time for extra help as your instructor can only help you as much as you are willing or able to be helped.

How To Read Problems Effectively
(What is there is overcome)

1. The difficulty of "density" (facts or problems briefly and concisely stated in the most condensed form.
2. Details (notice them, especially the important ones).
3. Grasping essential information and recognizing specific questions to be answered.
4. Read carefully to understand each symbol, word or phrase.

5. By reading once, twice or three times should be able to picture the problem and separate the facts <u>given</u> from the facts <u>required</u>.
6. Next a (minimal) technical vocabulary must be mastered.
   a. Some words have special meaning (or different meanings)
   b. Know symbols
   c. Know abbreviations
   d. Know how to read charts, tables, graphs, etc.
   e. Be able to realize the <u>ideas</u> and <u>concepts</u> of the course

<u>Reading of Problems</u>

1. Different kinds of problems require different kinds of reading
   a. Read over and back (get the main idea)
   b. See the realtionships
   c. Read carefully as to know the significance of each word
   d. Problems are stated briefly and require concentration.

The Five Steps for Reading A Problem

1. Reading carefully to learn what the problem is about and what is given; this may involve forming a mental picture of the problem situation.
2. Finding out what information is asked for
3. Deciding what facts are needed for the solution of the problem; this requires logical thinking
4. Choosing the methods of computation needed
5. Testing the reasonableness and accuracy of one's answer

The Above Points in Short Form

1. What kind of problem is it?
2. What information pertinent to the solution is given?
3. What is asked for?
4. What computations are necessary and in what order?
5. How can I test to see if the answer is correct?

Steps to Success

1. Be interested in your subject
2. Have a reason for studying
3. Concentrate

4. Get help when you need it

5. Have a desire to succeed by success

6. Know your goal

Topic V General Reading Habits:

1. Read a newspaper daily

2. Choose a book to read for pleasure

3. Prepare a statement as to why you feel you need help in reading

4. If your eyes need assistance from "glasses" use them. If you haven't seen an eye doctor in a year or so, get a checkup.

5. Prepare a time schedule of how you spend the week, Sunday through Saturday.

6. Select a proper place for your daily practice of at least one-hour Sunday-Saturday.

7. Keep a vocabulary notebook

There are social aspects of adult programs which may be capitalized on. Reading tests may be used but use them gently. Getting students to practice is a

great challenge in these "take home" programs. This writer has found that the Rateometer, Sra Better Reading Books, Baker's Reading Skills and the Reader's Digest are helpful materials. Discussions on what improvements may be reasonably expected might be included in the program. If the course is offered as a "regular" college course with time for practice during class, the group may respond better. In any event, plan your sessions carefully according to the interests and needs of the class.